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#3 FREE! MAY 2012

Comic Scape

COMIC AND COMIC-RELATED NEWS AND VIEWS

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!

THE BOX-OFFICE BLOCKBUSTER

AVENGERS v X-MEN!

DEFENDERS #4 FROM 1973 AND 2012

JUDGE DREDD IN THE USA

THIS DAY IN COMICS: MAY 1982

LSH: THE GREAT DARKNESS SAGA REMEMBERED

NEW COMIC STRIP

KID TIGER!

VERSUS! SPIDER-MAN v WOLVERINE!

Dead

GARY SIMPSON - LEE O'CONNOR

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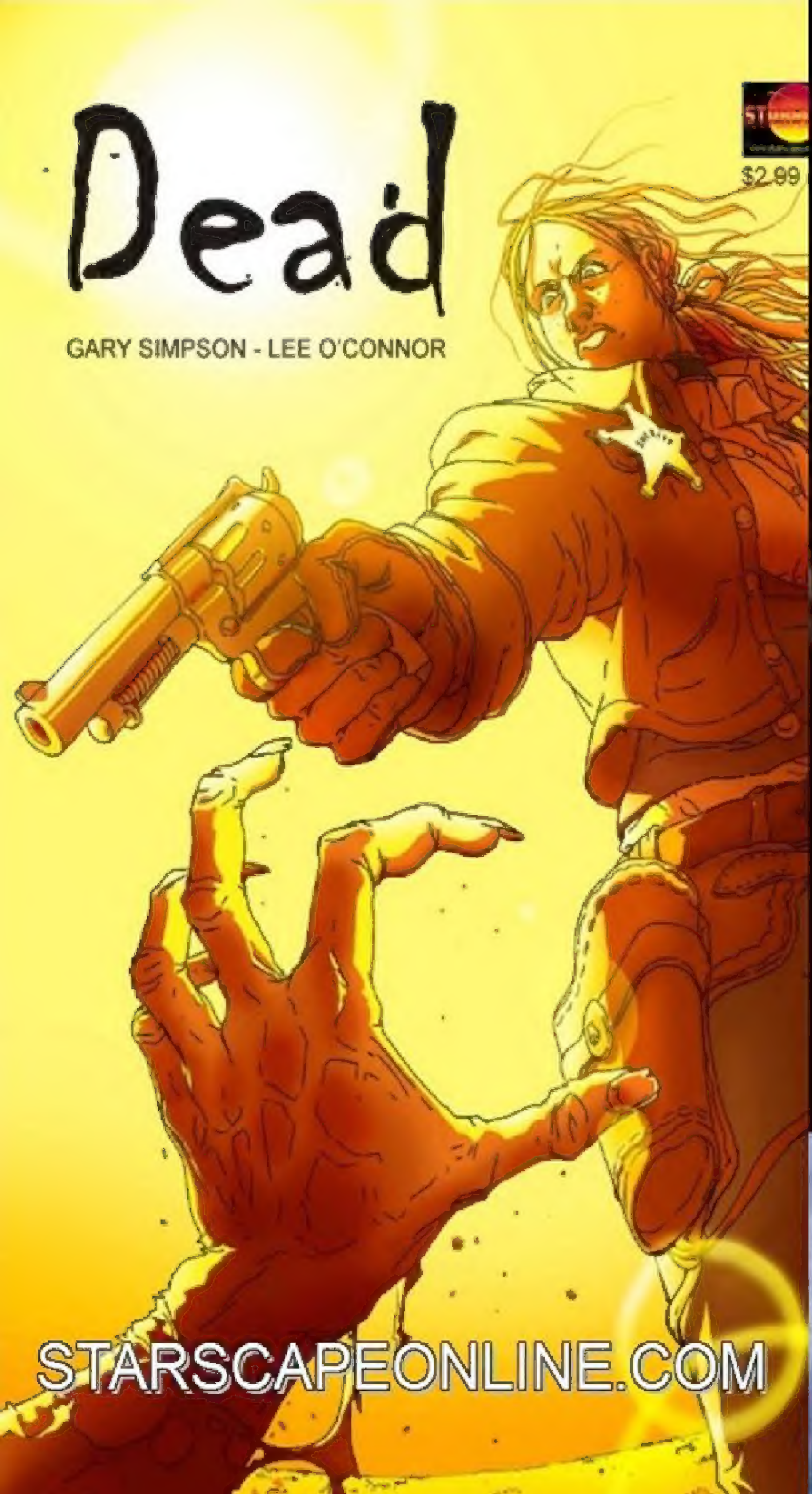

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STARSCAPE SAYS...

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Calling all Starkids!

Thanks and welcome to the third issue of COMICSCAPE.

Some of you might be wondering why it took so long between the second and third issue. Well, real life took over. And that included moving continents *twice*, as well as all the nonsense that goes with it.

Let's take a quick trip through some of the regulars to COMICSCAPE.

COMICS: yep, now as well as reading about comics, you can now also read comics. Want to see more? Let me know.

FEATURES: interviews, in-depth commentaries and opinions.

OLD AND THE NEW: where we compare the same issues from different volumes, so, in this issue Defenders #4 from 1973 and 2012.

NEWS: all that's hip and happening in four-colour fun and related media.

SUSPENDED ANIMATION: comic reviews and commendations.

TALES THAT ASTONISHED: the greatest stories in comicdom celebrated, plus FLICKS THAT TIME FORGOT, for classic movies and television.

THIS DAY IN COMICS: a run through comics glorious and murky past

VERSUS: deciding comics' greatest battles…once and for all!

WEBSCAPE: flagging up the most entertaining comic websites on the net.

As ever, I'm interested in what you enjoy and what you don't. Where are we getting it right and what can be improved. And if you've ever fancied getting involved, whether that's in writing articles, compiling news, submitting comics, design or anything else appropriate, just let me know.

Reach me at comicscape@starscapeonline.com Until then...

Keep watching the stars!

Chris Smillie
(Starchief)

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NEWS

AvX

(Marvel Comics)

AvX sees Marvel's two premiere teams, the X-Men and the Avengers, do battle with each other. A battle compounded by the fact that many of their members have been adherents to both groups, such as the Beast (who had a great run around Jim Shooter time), Sub-Mariner and, of course, Wolverine.

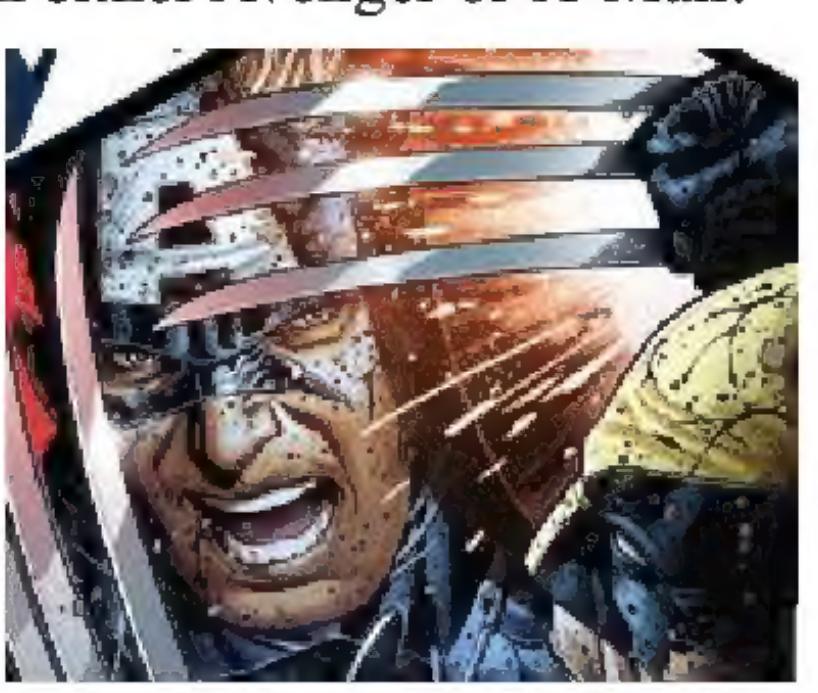
Although a 12-issue mini-series, AvX is inevitably shadowed by numerous tie-ins. However, Marvel is at pains to point out that fans will not lose out by only reading the main series, unlike the disastrous Infinite Crisis, which relied on the barely read Superman 3-D for a coherent ending.

The series sees X-Man Cable, future son of Scott Summers (Cyclops) and Madelyne Pryor, warn of a disaster caused by the death of Hope – a death laid at the feet of the Avengers.

Meanwhile, Earth's mightiest heroes are attempting to forestall a grievous threat to the planet – a threat known as Phoenix! Only this time the entity is after Hope as its host.

The Avengers decide the best place for Hope is under their protection. Cyclops, partially driven by guilt for the original death of Jean Grey as Phoenix, thinks otherwise and vows to protect the girl.

Wolverine is caught between both groups however. Not so much which side to pledge his allegiance to but which side to be more against! After seeing the power of Hope, Logan decides she must die – a decision that doesn't go down well with either Avenger or X-Man!

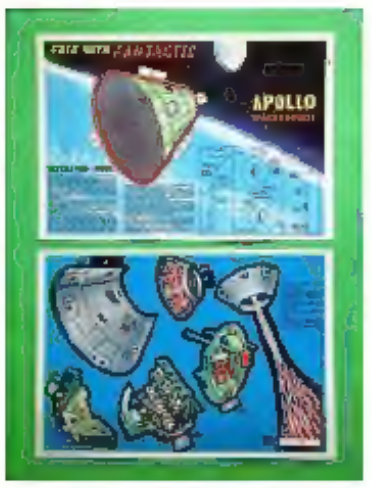


AvX has been well-received by both critics and fans, despite these days of 'arc fatigue'. This has meant AvX rising to a best-selling position in Diamonds comic shop sales.

eBay sales figures

Some of the big news from sales at eBay was the Walking Dead #1 (CGC 9.9) selling for a massive $7,000.

A near-mint 2000AD #2, first appearance of Judge Dredd, complete with biotronic stickers, sold for $992.17.



British humour comic Sparky #86, complete with Buzzy Buzzer free gift, sold for a massive £227! Other gifts include Pow! #54 stickers (£112), Terrific #53 spacecraft cut-out (£127) and Pow! #3 Haggis Launcher for £340!

"Amazing Spider-Man" Statues

(Marvel Comics)

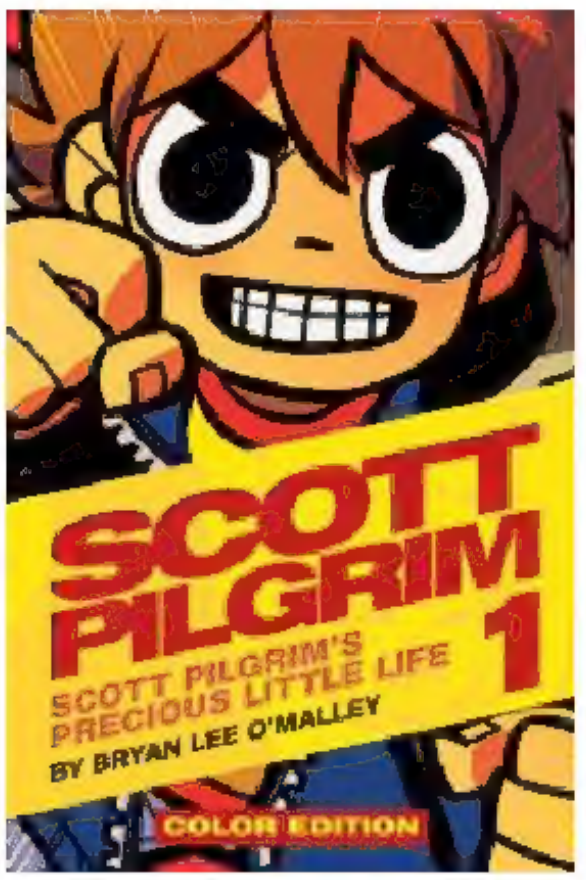
Diamond Select Toys has been out of the Marvel statue game for a little while, but at one point they were steadily documenting every corner of the Marvel Universe, and one of the crown jewels in the line was their assortment of Spider-Man 3 busts and statues. Since they had so much fun working on the movie version of Ol' Web-Head last time, they decided to get back into the game for the new movie, The Amazing Spider-Man! There are four busts and one mini-statue in the works, and they're all designed by Gentle Giant Studios, based on digital data from the movie. Designed to be displayed individually or as a group, all of the busts stand 9-10 inches tall (The Lizard is enormous)

and feature character-specific patterning on their bases; the battle-damaged Spider-Man bust even comes with interchangeable masked and unmasked heads, as well as an interchangeable left hand! The statue is around 8 inches tall, and shows Spidey perched on the translucent wall of a New York City skyscraper. Look for them to arrive sometime this June!

Scott Pilgrim goes Full-Colour

(Indie Press)

This August, Oni Press and Bryan Lee O'Malley will be bringing the uber-popular Scott Pilgrim series back to store shelves, but this time as an ultra-swank, 6 X 9, full-colour hardcover edition. Scott Pilgrim Colour Hardcover, Volume 1 reprints the Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life for the first time in full colour. The digital colouring is by the Shuster Award-nominated artist Nathan Fairbairn, the colourist for Batman Incorporated and Swamp Thing, and the whole thing is capped with a new cover from O'Malley.



"Everybody loves Bryan's black-and-white artwork," series editor James Lucas Jones explained, "but after seeing the few colour stories he did with Scott and the gang, it was hard to avoid imagining a 'what if?' scenario. Now those wild dreams have come true. And to have one of the best colourists in the industry at the helm, that just seals the deal."

"It's been eight years since the first Scott Pilgrim book was published," Oni marketing director Cory Casoni added. "Since then, the series has seen over twenty first reprints of the original format, with over a million copies of the first volumes sold. Scott Pilgrim Colour Hardcover, Volume 1 takes the familiar story from the original Scott Pilgrim series and gives it a new look. Plus it includes previously unpublished extras and bonus materials making this mighty tome one that's required reading for Scottaholics everywhere!"

Scott Pilgrim Colour Hardcover, Volume 1 will be the first of six hardcover reprints to be published bi-annually. Scott Pilgrim Colour Hardcover, Volume 2 is currently scheduled for an October 2012 release.

Each volume will be sized at 6" x 9", making it bigger than the original versions, as well. "We're upgrading the presentation in every way," Jones said. "The traditional black-and-white versions will be there for those who still prefer that option, but now everyone can have a choice. One, the other, or both!"

Scheduled for a August 8th, 2012 publication date, Scott Pilgrim Color Hardcover, Volume 1 will retail for $24.99.

The Dark Judges are back

(British Comics)

Way back in the day, John Wagner and Brian Bolland brought forth a twisted nemesis to Judge Dredd in the Dark Judges. Now Wagner brings back the unholy trio of Judge Fear, Judge Fire, and Judge Mortis.

The series arc is part of the Day of Chaos epic that Rebellion, publishers of 2000AD, describe as "the most keenly anticipated 2000AD event in years".

LEGO Batman 2: DC Super Heroes

(DC Comics)

Batman and Robin return in LEGO® Batman™ 2: DC Super Heroes, the highly-

anticipated sequel to the best-selling LEGO® videogame of all time, which to date has sold more than 11 million units worldwide. This time the Dynamic Duo join forces with other famous DC super heroes including Superman, Wonder Woman and Green Lantern to stop the notorious villains Lex Luthor and The Joker from destroying Gotham City. Batman fans of all ages will enjoy a new and original story filled with classic LEGO videogame action and humor as players fight to put the bad guys back behind bars.

The LEGO Avengers

(Marvel Comics)

In related news, Marvel has teamed up with LEGO for an awesome poster for "Marvel's The Avengers"! Featuring Iron Man, Captain America, Thor, Black Widow, Hulk, Hawkeye and Nick Fury in LEGO form, the poster pays homage to the most recent theatrical one-sheet.

Spidey's Greatest Cover

(Marvel Comics)

In a poll of readers, Comic Book Resources have revealed their favourite ever Spider-Man cover. And it's this classic beauty from the mind and pen of John Ring-A-Ding Romita.

For the rest of the top 50, see http://comicbookresources.com/?page=article&id=37893

Waid releases Thrillbent

(Independent Comics)

Superhero comics fan favourite, Mark Waid has launched his new webcomic site. Mark describes his raison d'etre in his welcome page:

"Thrillbent was created because John Rogers and I believe strongly that comics can and will be a thriving mass medium in the digital age if–IF–they're created for modern media devices and not exclusively for printed pamphlets that are overpriced, uninviting to new readers, and abominably distributed in only a relative handful of storefronts nationwide."

Mark is at pains to point out he's not trying to kill the printed word. However, by using comics that actually fit the screen, he hopes to create comics that are comfortable to read online.

The O-Men return!

(UK Independent Comics)

Martin Eden has been making big headlines with his LBGT series, Spandex. However, Eden first came to attention with his long-running superhero serial, the O-Men.

The O-Men first saw light in 1997. The series closely resembled a Vertigo-inspired version of the X-Men.

The first of five collected editions is due to be released at the May Kapow convention. The fifth? Probably when Martin finishes it!

Avengers Assemble

(Marvel Films)

Marvel's Avengers movie has taken box offices by storm. The movie took a mind-shattering $80.5M, according to Hollywood Reporter, on its first Friday in the US. Worldwide, the movie has grossed over $400M!

Amongst the plaudits the film has taken was an incredible 9+ at imdb.com (although it's slipped a little now) and favourable ratings at Rotten Tomatoes. See our review in this very issue!

Higher Earth sells out!

(Independent Comics)

Higher Earth #1 has gone to a second print seven days before its release on May 9th!

Created and written by Sam Humphries, Higher Earth is his sci-fi follow up to last year's indie sensation Our Love Is Real. Francesco Biagini is the artist for this new ongoing series, a science fiction epic of infinite possibilities.

"Space is dead. Why conquer other planets when there's a perfectly good Earth in the universe next door? Heidi, a girl born in garbage. Rex, a soldier gone rogue. The only thing between them and their destiny is an empire of a hundred different Earths, across a hundred alternate timelines. One majestic planet dominates them all: Higher Earth."

The Black Dossier finally gets a UK release

(UK Independent Comics)

Whilst the rest of the world got to read Alan Moore and Kev O'Neill's League of Extraordinary Gentlemen's Black Dossier, 'copyright reasons' ensured that Britain could not issue copies.

Rumour abounds that the decision to withhold UK distribution was down to concerns over then distributor, DC Comics and Paul Levitz specifically. Knockabout appears to have circumvented those problems, ensuring a final legal release for this compilation of literary references and re-imagining of classic characters.

The Jikan Chronicles

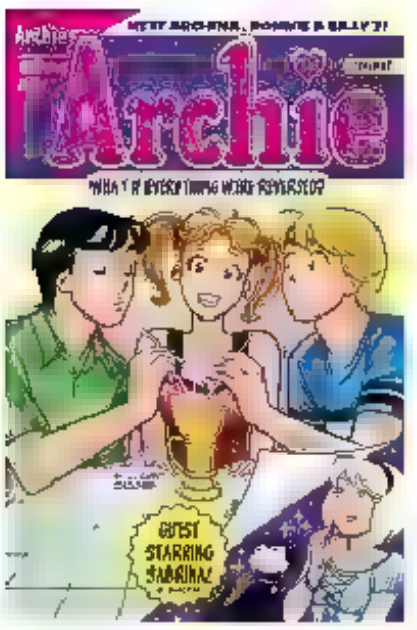
(UK Independent Comics)

The Jikan Chronicles announces their second volume in the saga of the time-travelling Samurai warrior.

Released by UK small press publishers, Paragon, the protagonist continues his demon-hunting through the dimensions. Jikan is written by Dirk Van Dom, Matt McLaughlin, Chris Cronin and Mark Howard and drawn by El Chivo, Chris Askham, Dustin Parr and Davey Candlish.

Archie…or is it Archina???

(Archie Comics)



This August sees the boys and girls of Riverdale perform the Great Switcheroo. Upon overhearing the guys and gals grumbling over how the other half has it easier, Sabrina the Witch's mischievous cat Salem turns the town upside down when he dishes out the ultimate genetic makeover!

Chaos ensues as the teens discover it's not as easy to walk in each other's shoes (or heels!) as they originally thought, so it's up to Sabrina to set things right! Will Salem's spell wear off, thus giving the gang a new appreciation for who they are, or will the switch up become permanent?

Captain America 2

(Marvel Films)

Following the success of the Avengers movie, Chris Evans will be recapturing his role as Cap. The movie will feature Steve Rogers adjusting to his new life following his wake up from his World War II coma, plus he also has to adjust to his new role as SHIELD operative.

The movie will also see Samuel L Jackson return as Nick Fury and Neal McDonough as Dum Dum Dugan, from Captain America: The First Avenger.

MorrisonCon Line-up

The Grant Morrison convention will be held in Las Vegas on the 28th to 30th September. Guests announced so far are Gerard Way, Jonathan Hickman, Frank Quitely, J.H.

Williams III and Chris Burnham. Expect more announcements soon.

The Dark Knight Rises

(DC Films)

The much-anticipated final chapter in the Christian Bale Batman trilogy is due for release on July 20.

This movie will see Batman face-off against both Catwoman and Bane – the man responsible for breaking Bruce Wayne's back in the nefarious Knightfall comic arc. How will this play out in the movie? Well, with a byline of "The Legend Ends", it's doubtful it's a happy ending!

The Art of Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter

(Independent Comics)

In connection with the summer release of the 20th Century Fox motion picture Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter, renowned director Timur Bekmambetov, in association with Aspen Comics, will be releasing The Art of Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter deluxe edition hardcover book. The film, directed by Bekmambetov and produced by him along with Tim Burton and Jim Lemley, will be released domestically on June 22nd.

The Art of Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter will contain 128 pages of never-before-seen storyboards, conceptual art, and production illustrations. Bekmambetov discusses the film and the accompanying art book's release:

"Our visual team, led by Bazelevs's storyboard artist Indar Dzhendubaev, created a rich and exciting world for the movie. In revisiting their art, we tried to craft a book that pushes the envelope of visual design and does justice to their great work. I am very happy that fans will finally get to enjoy the expanded world of Abraham Lincoln Vampire Hunter."

Bekmambetov's production company Bazelevs has teamed up with Aspen MLT, Inc. to produce The Art of Abraham Lincoln:

Vampire Hunter. David Wohl, who is overseeing the project as editor, divulged more about the behind-the-scenes book:

"Timur's attention to detail and vision for the project, combined with the exquisite artwork for the film in the hands of Aspen's designers, has created an "art-of" book that is truly unique and visually spectacular. It's been a pleasure to be part of this one-of-a-kind project."

The Art of Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter will be in stores in June.

Another Lobo re-write

(DC Films)

Lobo, the former Omega Man and inter-galactic bounty hunter, has again undergone a re-write for a proposed movie, reports Deadline.

Originally written by Guy Ritchie, he passed the project onto Don Payne, whose credits include Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer and Thor. However, now, Brad Peyton has now taken over the scripting. A move that may cause some surprise as Peyton's big break was with the family adventure, Journey 2: The Mysterious Island.

Lobo is a hard-drinking, cigar-chomping, ultra-violent biker.

Atomeka to return

(UK Independent Comics)

Bleeding Cool reports that much-loved Atomeka Press is due to return.

Dave Elliot appeared on their forum to confirm that a Monster Massacre collection will be released under the imprint. Elliot also held out hopes for a monthly MM, or even a return of A1 magazine. Elliot however stated that he is unlikely to reprint any former material from those days.

Spider-Man movie

(Marvel Films)

Marvel have released images of the Lizard from the new Spider-Man movie – release date: 3rd July.

And here's a couple from ol'Web-Head himself.

City of Dredd

(British Comics)

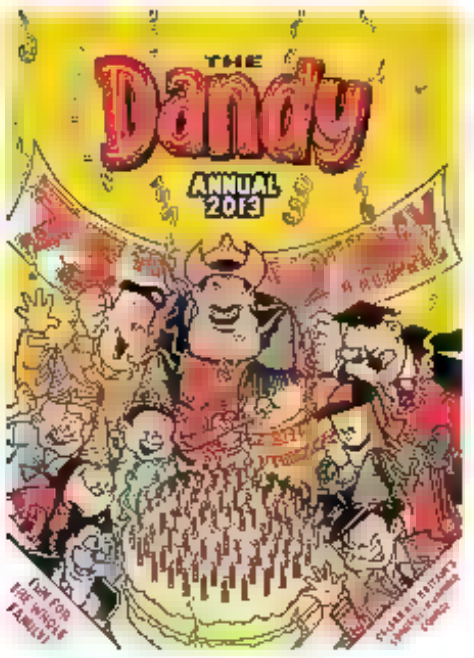
John Caliber, long-time expert in all things Judge Dredd, has released an unofficial guide to the Mega-City One lawmaker.

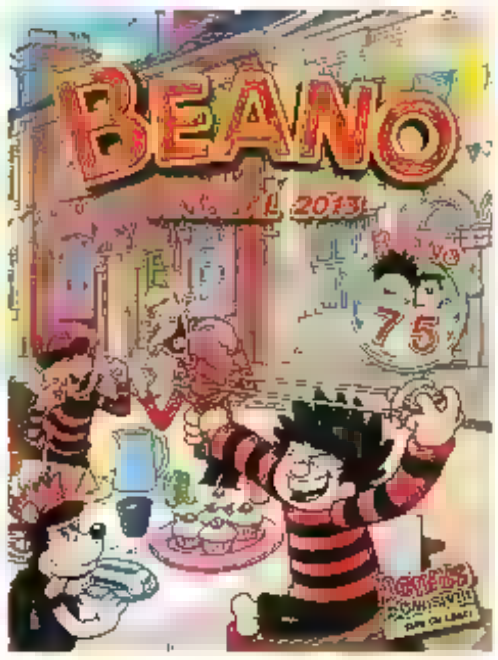
Caliber has collated and summarised every piece of Dredd history, then displayed these as full-colour maps with a cornucopia of facts and figures.

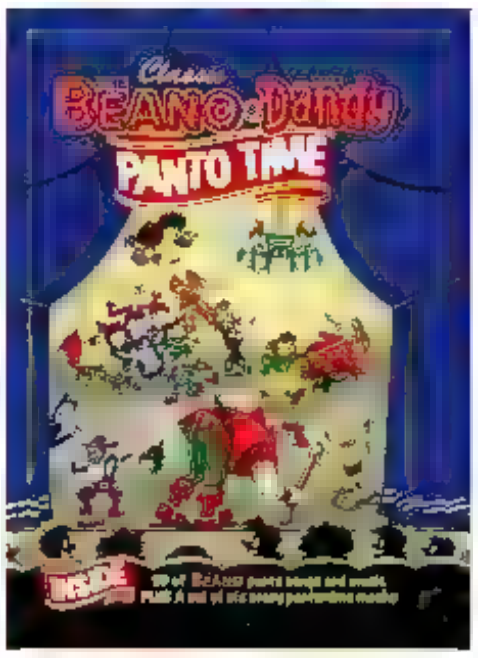
DC Thomson Annuals

(British Comics)

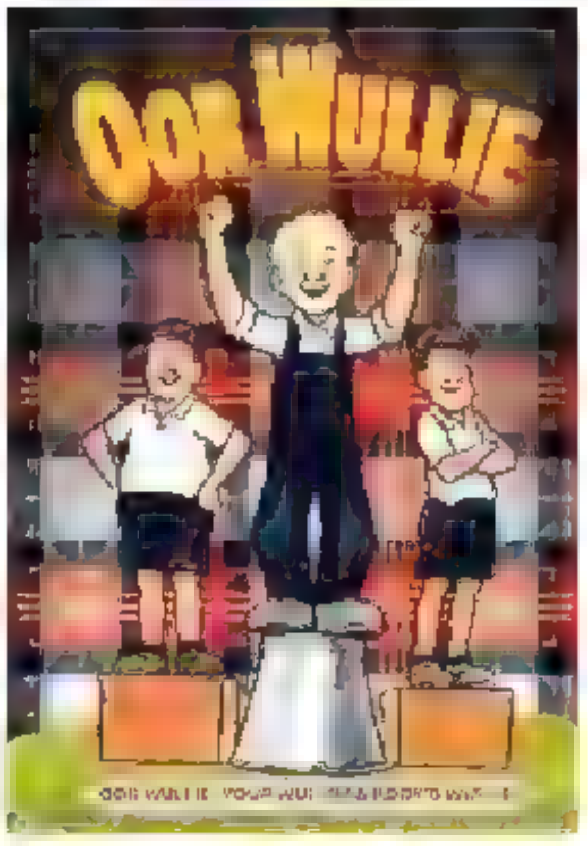
Looking forward to Christmas? It may seem a little early but DC Thomson, the UK's biggest comic publisher, has released images of their hardback annuals for 2013.







Both the Beano and Dandy celebrate an amazing 75 years, and this is displayed prominently on their covers.



As well as classic Broons and Oor Wullie, the boy with the bucket also has his own annual – although you could argue that's really a bi-annual, as it's shared on alternate years with the Broons.

Horror Award for Moore

Alan Moore, Northampton's finest comic-scribe, has been named the first recipient of the Bram Stoker Superior Achievement in a Graphic Novel Award.

Graphicly drops its apps

(Webcomics)

In a surprise announcement, Graphicly, the web comic distributor, announced it was dropping its own platform. Instead, Graphicly will attempt to push its products via existing technologies, such as Apple's iBooks, Amazon's Kindle and the Barnes & Noble Nook.

With this expansion, Graphicly aim to help publishers get more titles into these eBookstores, explained CEO Micah Baldwin.

Kick Ass 2

(Independent Films)

Bleeding Cool reports that John Romita Jr. has stated that Kick Ass 2 will begin filming this summer. Indeed Romita declared an interest in being responsible for an animated sequence, although he also proclaimed that no decision had yet been made in regards to that.

Kick Ass is the brainchild of Scottish writer, Mark Millar. The well-received first movie starred Nicholas Cage and generated controversy due to the inclusion of the foul-mouthed, violent but very young Hit-Girl.

Kick Ass 2 is due to be released in May 2013.

Tokyopop is back

(Manga)

Online retailer Right Stuf announced that, through a special arrangement with Japanese publisher Gentosha Comics and Tokypop, it will be offering manga fans the opportunity to purchase Hetalia Axis Powers, Volume 3, in English-translated book form for the first time ever, as well as reprints of the manga series' first two volumes, exclusively through RightStuf.com.

Volume 3 will be available in late June 2012, while Volumes 1 and 2 are each available immediately.

The Sloperian

(British Comics)

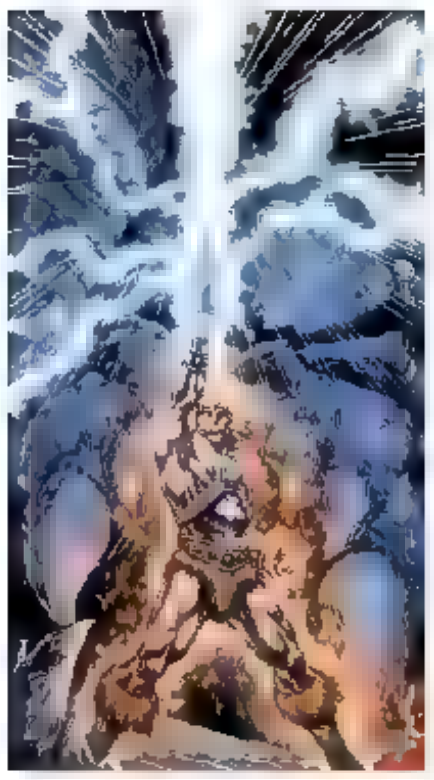
Alan Clark, a renowned expert in early British comics and storypapers, has self-published a fanzine aiming to shed light on those oft-ignored pre-cursors to the modern day comics.

The Sloperian – named after Ally Sloper, a character that dates back to Victorian times – features articles on Ally Sloper artist WG Baxter, early 20th century humour artist Harry O'Neill, humour artist and scripter AT "Charlie" Pease, DC Thomson adventure writer Gilbert Dalton, Black Bob artist Jack Prout, and Illustrated Chips' various tramp characters.

The Sloperian is currently only available via eBay.

DC to publish He-Man

(DC Comics)



Eighties cartoon series, He-Man and the Masters of the Universe, is set to return to comics. The series was previously published by Image, Marvel and CrossGen, however, it began life as a comic with DC Comics. Older fans may remember insets in many titles

DC will be presenting all-new adventures of Castle Grayskull. The adventure begins, says writer James Robinson, with Skeletor managing to erase the memory of the heroes, including Prince Adam, aka He-Man.

Archie's Digital Crusaders

(Archie Comics)

Archie Comics are bringing back their superheroes from yesteryear on the 16th May. The digital imprint will carry the famous name of Red Circle – the publisher's moniker at the time of the original ultra-heroes, the Mighty Crusaders. The series will later be followed by print editions.

The first arc is a six-issue sequence, called Rise of the Heroes. These heroes being The Web, Shield, Fly-Girl, Jaguar, the Comet and more.

Archie/Red Circle will be using their tried'n'trusted 'family entertainment' genre, which is hoped will be more popular than DC Comics lack of success with a more traditional action line.

First Comics announcement

(Independent Comics)

First Comics celebrated their 30th anniversary with a re-launch at the Chicago Expo.

Instead of using a distributor, such as Diamond, First intends to sell directly to comic shops.

IDW's Transformers

(Independent Comics)

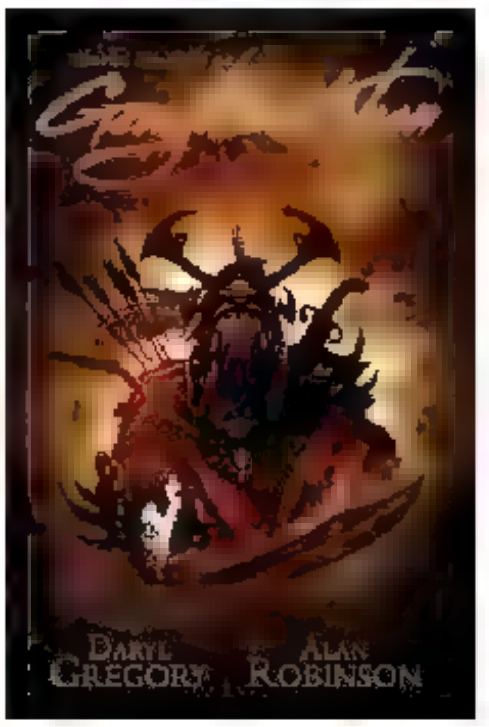
IDW has picked up the rights to Transformers. According to Down The Tubes, Transformers: Regeneration One will continue from the Generation One Transformers comics originally published by Marvel UK.

Transformers: Regeneration One #81 will be available in July and will be written by Simon Furman and legendary Transformers artist Andrew Wildman.

...and Genghis Khan

(Independent Comics)

This July, IDW Publishing will bring you Secret Battles of Genghis Khan, the story of how a boy named Temujin became the founder and Great Khan of the Mongol Empire. Adapting Khan's engrossing life to graphic-novel form are writer Daryl Gregory, award-winning novelist of The Devil's Alphabet and Pandemonium, and artists Alan Robinson (Weekly World News, Phoenix Without Ashes) and Jay Fotos (Locke & Key). The all-new, 104-page graphic novel will also feature a special painted cover by Sam Shearon as well as back-up material detailing Khan's life and battles.



"My job," Gregory said, "was to comb through his history to find the key moments in his life and discover what drove him. Alan had the toughest job, though. He had to show not only the emotional lives of a huge cast of characters, but deliver the epic sweep of the story, with one bloody battle after another. People are going to be blown away by what he's done."

To this day, Khan is known as one of the greatest leaders by conquering lands one military victory after another. By the end of his life, the Mongol Empire occupied a large percentage of Central Asia and China. Although famous for being heartless, Khan was a man that was both brutal and fair. He was cruel to his enemies, but even-handed to those that were loyal, no matter what their tribal background or ethnicity. Secret Battles of Genghis Khan outlines the history and experiences of the man that is regarded as the founding father of Mongolia.

…and Judge Dredd

(Independent Comics)

IDW has partnered with 2000AD to launch a line of Judge Dredd comics starting later this year.

Details and creative teams will be announced at a later date, but the partnership includes the creation of all-new Judge Dredd comics as well as classic Dredd material.

"Judge Dredd turns 35 this year, and it's great to help him celebrate his birthday like this," said Chris Ryall, IDW's Chief Creative Officer/Editor-in-Chief. "It was great to meet up with the 2000AD team at the recent London Super Con and cement the partnership on this one. My interest in Judge Dredd far predates my tenure at IDW, so it's a real drokkin' pleasure for us to now be the first American publisher in 18 years to create new tales of Dredd."

"IDW are renowned for their ability to create new comics for existing characters with both respect and imagination," said Jason Kingsley, CEO of Rebellion, "so we were intrigued when they approached us. Their familiarity with Dredd and passion for the character were vital components in making this partnership happen. With 2000AD's longest-serving, and multiple award-winning, editor Matt Smith working with IDW on establishing the new series, we're delighted to make 2012 an even more spectacular year for Judge Dredd and 2000AD."

Jack Staff no more?

(Independent Comics)

Paul Grist has announced the quite brilliant Jack Staff is now defunct. There is a possibility of a return, however, as a mini-series.

Jack Staff followed the adventures of a British super-hero not dissimilar to Marvel's Union Jack. Indeed, nods to Marvel (e.g. Sergeant States) and British comics (such as Archie the Robot-esque Tom Tom the Robot Man) were welcome and plentiful.

Grist blamed the hiatus on poor sales and will instead concentrate on Mudman. Perhaps though, it's not a lack of interest but distribution that means sequels to sell outs will not be bought in in sufficient quantities or perhaps even at all! See 'Are British Comic Shops Failing British Comics?' later in ComicScape.

Tank Girl news

(Independent Comics)

What's bald, and smelly, snogs kangaroos, wears shoes that don't fit and a bra that's too tight (and knickers that need a good wash), smokes, drinks, and fights too much for her own good… and has her original stories, now available digitally for the first time via comiXology and iVerse?

You guessed it! TANK GIRL!

Titan Comics is delighted to announce its partnership with comiXology and iVerse for the release of Jamie Hewlett and Alan Martin's Classic Tank Girl stories on the iPad, iPhone, Android devices, Kindle Fire and the web.

First appearing in Deadline magazine, the anarchic series follows the adventures of Tank Girl and her mutant kangaroo boyfriend, Booga. Jamie Hewlett may have famously gone on to create the visuals for the cartoon band Gorillaz – but this is your first opportunity to experience Hewlett's fully-formed and gloriously anarchic artistic vision on your favourite computer or tablet!

Titan Comics is releasing these original stories in chronological order as fourteen digitally remastered issues! The first five issues are now available to purchase digitally via comiXology and iVerse, with new selections following every four weeks!

As well as releasing stories from her early years, Titan Comics is building the complete Tank Girl digital collection, starting with Martin & Rufus Dayglo's Bad Wind Rising. Described by Aint It Cool as "possibly this year's coolest comic", Bad Wind Rising sees Tank Girl and Booga, her partner of 22 years, split up!

Titan is also releasing The Hole of Tank Girl. This will comprise of "everything ever done" by Martin and Hewlett. The book, according to Martin, will be presented in pristine, recovered, repaired, and remastered large format. Hard cover, slipcase, over 30 pages of unseen archive material, with the first 2,000 copies hand signed on a bound-in parchment page by Martin, and a glorious cover of a more "mature" looking Tank Girl by Hewlett.

Superman legal battle

(DC Comics)

Warner Bros., owners of DC Comics, have announced what they term a "significant victory" in the ownership of the character of Superman.

Following a change in US copyright law, the families of Superman creators, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, have announced their intention to claim back ownership of the Big Blue Boy Scout. Indeed, this is similar to the claims made by Jack Kirby to take back the Fantastic Four and other characters (co-)created by the King at Marvel.

The lawyer for both these cases is one Marc Toberoff, and he, rather than the families, is the centre of the court case.

Warner's has maintained that Toberoff should not be involved in the case as, not only is he the lawyer, but he also has a business stake in the future of Superman's ownership. For proof, Warner's point to an attempted deal between Toberoff and the Siegel/Shuster group. However, the latter are at pains to point out any such deal was cancelled.

Warner's has managed to obtain the legal right to see documents from a former Toberoff legal accomplice that details plans for a deal between the lawyer and the families. Despite attempting to halt such a ruling, Toberoff insists the documents will have no bearing on the outcome of the case.

Earth-2 is here!

(DC Comics)

A notable absence from DC Comics 52 re-launch was the absence of the Justice Society and related characters. Earth-2 was initially introduced in the classic Flash of Two Worlds (Flash vol.1 #123), where it was revealed that the golden age characters of Wildcat, Dr Fate, Dr Midnite and Hourman, as well as versions of the Flash, Green Lantern, Batman, Superman and others occupied a counter Earth.

Earth-2, out now, follows the devastation of a battle against Steppenwolf that leaves the world devoid of superheroes. However, that's all about to change for businessman Alan Scott and Mercury's protégé, Jay Garrick.

RECOMMENDED COMICS FOR MAY 2012

FEATURES

Are British comic shops failing British comics?

Let's lay it on the line - I used to run a British comic shop and I used to be a British-based comics publisher. I've seen it from both sides. I also know that many shops are just not trying hard enough. Not just at promoting comics from their own country, but also turning that into more business for themselves.

If there are any retailers out there, I know what you are going to say - "small press are notoriously difficult to sell". Quite true, but let's leave the indie comics aside for a minute. Our American friends would probably collapse if they knew that the top selling comics in Britain are not stocked by British comic shops. But it's true!

Comics such as the Beano, Dr Who, the Dandy, Toxic! and a variety of others are only on sale in newsagents, not comic shops. The argument, I know, will be that Diamond stocks comics on a direct sale basis (the comic shop buys the comics but can't give them back), whilst newsagents are stocked on a sale-or-return deal (the shop tries to sell them - if they don't, they give them back). But is that really the issue? I'm quite sure distributors would be happy to sell more items via comic shops as well as newsagents.

Another argument would be that it's not the comic shop's clientele. Well, of course it's not. If a comic shop doesn't sell kids comics, then kids are hardly likely to be able to buy them from there. And there's another point. They're KIDS comics. You know, the demographic that retailers have been trying to encourage into their shops for years? Let them buy their Dandies and, hey, remember that Avengers film that you just saw? Well, here's the comic...and there's a new comics fan with more years ahead of them than your traditional fanboy buying up the latest Hawk & Dove.

Talking of Hawk and Dove...

Here's where the indie press come in...small press are very difficult to sell. What it needs really is some

kind of filter, so that, you might say, we have an indie press and a small press. That is, saleable books with a mainstream appeal, plus homemade comics that could only ever be of interest to a cult audience. So does that preclude not selling indie comics at the moment? Hell, no. Walk into your nearest Forbidden Planet or whoever and count how many copies they have of the aforementioned Hawk & Dove or the revamped Power Man & Iron Fist, or even the now defunct Justice Society of America (pre-Final Crisis). There's quite a few! And they ain't gonna sell. Try to find Strip Magazine and you'll be lucky. Plenty of Frankenstein, Agent of Shade though...

So what can comic shops do to sell UK indie comics? Firstly, insist on a sampler to see the quality or not. Take 2-5 on a sale-or-return basis. Don't insist on the ridiculous American format. We don't use that size in Britain. What's wrong with A4 and A5 comics? It's no less appealing a size, plus can be produced cheaper in Britain, so we can actually sell indie comics at comparative prices. We just don't have the printers here to sell at US-size taking into account a 50% distro cut.

So, there you have it. British comic shops can sell more by stocking the most popular British comics, whilst also establishing a younger audience to graduate onto their other stock. Meanwhile, by allowing British comic sizes, they can increase their sales by allowing British creators to sell comics at reasonable prices.

Doesn't seem like rocket science to me.

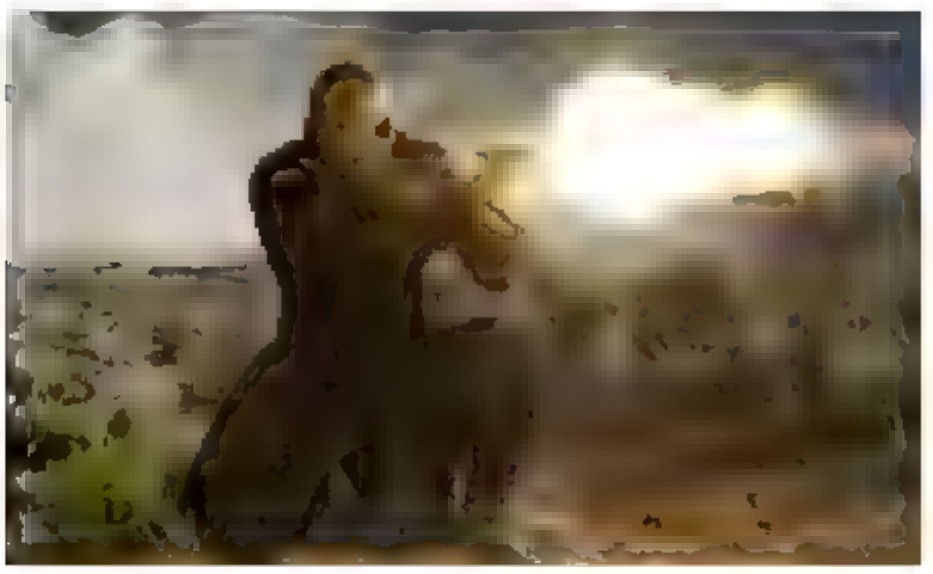
We would all like to see comic shops and stores across the world succeed – what are YOUR solutions to boost sales?

comics@starscapeonline.com

Avengers Assemble

In a quite spectacular movement, way above all expectations, Avengers Assemble smashed all records for box-office openings. Previous records were set by the Dark Knight ($158.4 million) and Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2 ($169.2 million). However, Avengers Assemble shattered those by raking in $200.3 million in the North American opening. Already, the movie has taken in $641.8 million in just 12 days, completely eclipsing Iron Man 2's totality for 2010!

Hulk smash indeed!



I'm pleased to say the movie lives up to the hype. Hopefully, you've seen the previous films…and, more so, you didn't miss the scenes after the credits! If so, you'll know there's a certain cube of interest to Loki – god of mischief and brother to Thor ("…he's adopted…").

The characterisation is quite brilliant. We really have three sets of heroes: Bruce (Hulk) Banner and Tony (Iron Man) Stark as the technoboys, Thor and Steve (Captain America) Rogers as heroes out of time, with no concept of computers, and Natasha (Black Widow) Romanoff and Clint (Hawkeye) Barton as not-to-be-trusted SHIELD operatives.

The mood is darker than expected and the heroes less united than a team movie might have originally suggested. And for that, writer Joss Whedon must be congratulated. The Black Widow matches Loki (which Tom Hiddleston gets exactly) for scheming, whilst the Hulk's appearance has been so successful that a Hulk 2 is now being talked up.

Like all great Marvel moments, the action is forged by adversity. And this new team is all the better for it.

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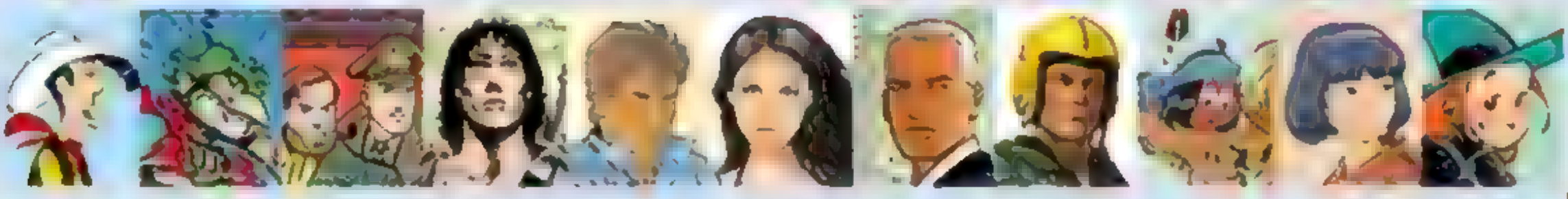
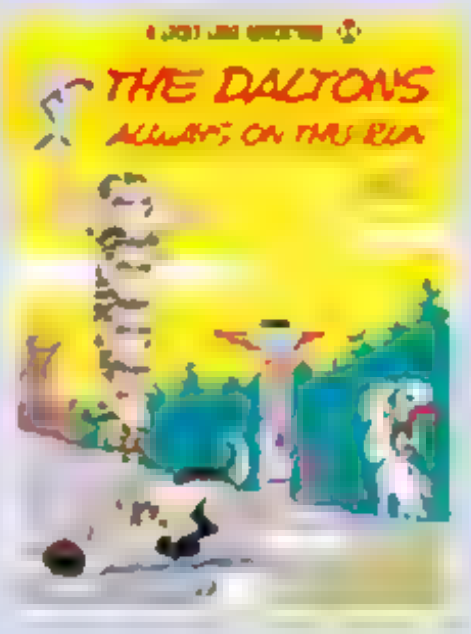


NEW RELEASES



LUCKY LUKE 34

MORRIS & GOSCINNY

THE DALTONS ALWAYS ON THE RUN

A general amnesty puts the Daltons back on the streets, something Lucky Luke isn't happy about. And, to make it worse, they seem to have become model citizens. But it doesn't take long for the stupidest quartet in the West to be back behind bars. Luke is already riding off into the sunset… But he's not counting on the Apache tribe that attacks the penitentiary where the Daltons are locked up…

VALERIAN AND LAURELINE 3

MÉZIÈRES & CHRISTIN

THE LAND WITHOUT STARS

When a rogue planet threatens a new Human colony, Valerian and Laureline are sent to investigate and discover a whole world beneath the surface! The people who live inside Zahir have never seen the stars. Divided along gender lines, torn by war, they are unaware that their planet is hurtling towards disaster. To stop it, the two agents of Galaxity will have to infiltrate both sides and force reconciliation.

LARGO WINCH 10

FRANCQ & VAN HAMME

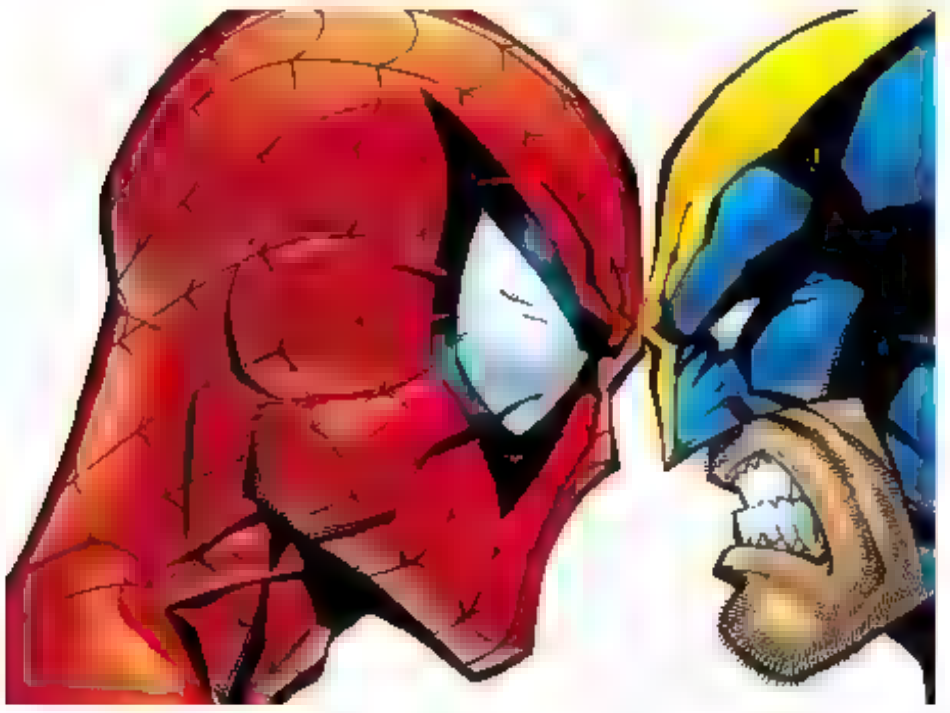
THE LAW OF THE DOLLAR

Accused of murder and hated by an entire nation, Largo is hiding in Canada and feeling very much alone. But his friendships are stronger than his circumstances, and soon he's able to counterattack against the various factions that are trying to bring him down. In the end, only the smartest and strongest will prevail for such is the Law of the Dollar.

VERSUS

Spider-Man v Wolverine

It's a tough old battle this one. Strength-wise, there's not too much between them, with even Marvel.com rating them equally. Spider-Man's agility and speed would make it difficult for Wolverine to catch. But, if it came down to it, one or the other, on which side would the coin fall?



Spidey is of course the joker of the pack. A seemingly carefree (although we know different, don't we guys?), wise-cracking wall-crawler. He's come up and triumphed against foes far more powerful than himself, such as the Rhino. Whilst his regular battles with enemies, like the Green Goblin, Mysterio and the Sandman show how adaptable and, much more importantly, how intelligent Web-Head is.

Wolverine? Well, he was designed to take on targets like the Hulk. He's soundly defeated one of the mightiest mortals in Sub-Mariner (although that may have been different had Namor been aware of Logan's trademark claws), as well as going toe-to-toe with the likes of Magneto.

So head-to-head, trading blow-for-blow, I can't see Spidey holding his own. Wolverine's adamantium claws would be too much for the Web-Slinger in that instant. If Spidey did somehow get the drop on the X-Man, then Wolverine's healing factor would come into play, allowing the mutant to take everything Spidey throws at him.

Using his webs to entrap Wolvie would probably be disastrous as those claws would once again make short shrift of this weapon.

So, on that basis, it's Wolverine.

However, Peter Parker is way more intelligent than Wolverine. His

capacity to outwit Logan, despite Wolverine's years of experience, is almost a given. What Parker would need to do to stand even the slimmest chance of success would be to somehow immobilise Wolverine in a place that would not be susceptible to Logan's claws.

Really, all the (X-)factors are on Logan's side. Spidey's chances are indeed slim....but I'd just fancy Web-Head to upset those odds once again. It's what he's good at!

WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE NEXT IN COMICS' ULTIMATE FACE OFF?

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SUSPENDED ANIMATION

Essential Fantastic Four Vol. 3

(Marvel Comics)

Simon and Garfunkel. Burns and Allen. Conway and Knotts. Sonny and Cher. Abbot and Costello. What do these duos have in common? They produced a lot of entertainment, for a lot of people, which will be remembered for a long time. Of course, we can add many more to such a list, but the duo this column is concerned with is Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, as the look back on their classic work on comics' premiere family continues.

Quick facts for the detail-oriented: Volume three of Essential Fantastic Four boasts some important firsts: The first appearances of the Silver Surfer, Galactus, the Inhumans, Blastaar, the Black Panther and Wyatt Wingfoot, as well as the discovery of the Negative Zone. By themselves, these accomplishments testify to the fact that Lee and Kirby were "in the zone" as much as any time in their respective careers. As if that weren't enough, the humor, drama, intensity and complexity of the plots reached a fever-pitch in this collection, with no sign of diminishing.

Additionally, if it can be stated when Jack Kirby's artwork became archetypal in its power and design, my vote is for this point in comics history. If volume two of Essential FF (mentioned in the last column) saw Kirby's style developing into that oft-imitated approach, then volume three is witness to its birth. Here, it is immense, audacious, innovative, and barely contained by the comics page. THIS is Jack Kirby.

Not that any more incentive for acquisition is needed, but let me point out that this body of work also contains Johnny Storm's initial encounter with the Human Torch of comics' Golden Age – a significant occurrence for fans and historians alike.

Essential Fantastic Four Volume 3 is a wonderful example of the best the medium of comics has to offer, and is recommended for everyone. Find it at your local comics shop, or online auctions and retailers.

(But, try the comics shop first.)

Essential Fantastic Four Vol. 4

The Fantastic Four was, for some time, Marvel Comics' flagship book. And for good reason. Stan Lee and Jack Kirby's historic work on the mag remains a measuring rod for comic book stories, even today. And the inspiration gained by fans during the Silver Age is mirrored by their modern day counterparts who are fortunate enough to uncover this sequential gem.

Volume 4 continues to showcase the explosive, burgeoning work of Jack Kirby, who, it could be argued, did more than anyone to put Marvel on the media map. It also contains significant premiers, including Psycho Man, "Him" (the character who would become Warlock), and the announcement of the Richards' baby. Additionally, there are interesting interactions between secondary characters Black Panther and the Inhumans.

From a storyline aspect, this volume sees the property persist in the epic tradition which can be said to have truly begun with the first Galactus story, reprinted in Volume 3. Fresh encounters with quality characters such as the afore-mentioned world-devourer, the Silver Surfer, Annihilus and others aid in the upward motion of the quality of this Lee and Kirby product. This is the kind of cosmic "stuff" which helped make The Fantastic Four one of the most fondly-followed works in comics history.

One of the most attractive characteristics of this volume is the significant amount of drama swirling around the Thing. Whether being manipulated by a villain bent on destroying the F.F. from within, or buffeted by his own struggles pertaining to being a man for himself, versus a monstrous powerhouse for the team, the tragedy surrounding Ben Grimm makes for superior four-color theatre.

All this, and an entertaining parody of the goings on in the Marvel Comics offices, written and drawn by Jack Kirby, earn this volume the highest recommendation for readers of all ages. Find it at your local comics shop, or online retailers and auctions. But, try your comics shop first.

Mark Allen

SIDDLETON BY SEA

PACK IT IN! THIS ISN'T FUNNY ANYMORE

HFFT!.... HOLD STILL YOU LITTLE WHELP

A FILTHY LITTLE TOMCAT LIKE YOU NEEDS NEUTERING

KRASH

MENTAL!....YOU'RE COMPLETELY MENTAL PULL ME UP YOU OLD COOT!

TSK...TSK... DON'T YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT HOW THIS HERO VILLAIN STUFF WORKS?

YOU HAD BETTER HOPE TIGERS HAVE NINE LIVES TOO!

KID TIGER

"LAUGHING AND FALLING"

STORY AND ART
JAMES CORCORAN
COLOURS
MATT SOFFE

GUESS MUM WAS RIGHT....

WELL THAT WAS UNDERWHELMING..

WHO'S FOR A SPOT OF JELLY AND ICE CREAM? BEFORE THINGS REALLY KICK OFF!

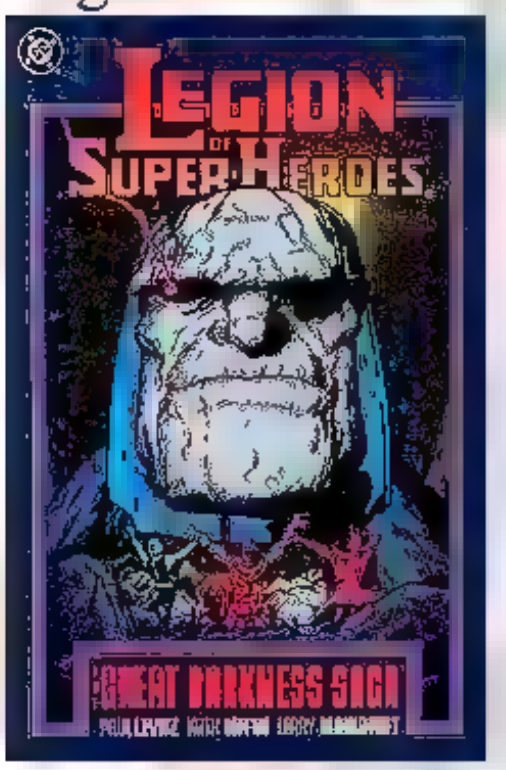
I SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN SCHOOL

KID TIGER continues next issue!

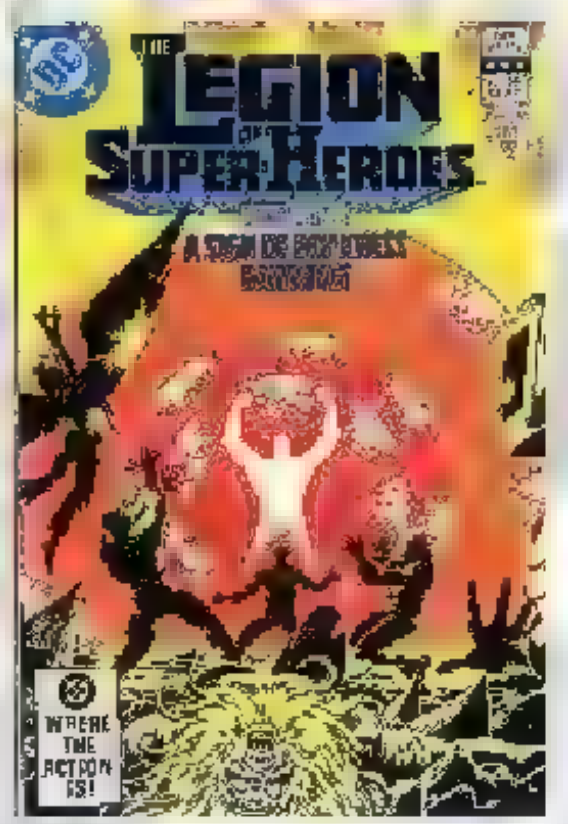
TALES THAT ASTONISHED

Legion of Super-Heroes: The Great Darkness Saga

In case you were unaware, the Legion of Super-Heroes was originally titled 'Superboy & the Legion of Super-Heroes', having graduated from Superboy's solo title - the Boy of Steel . would regularly appear in Adventure Comics.



Originally, the LSH were pretty juvenile. Good fun still but not really something that stood the test of time. That was until Jim Shooter took over. Big Jim was just a teen himself when he started writing. He began to develop the personality of characters, rather than the fairly two-dimensional run-ins they had previously been. Superboy himself was no longer central to the stories. More adult themes, such as race came in, including the notorious answer to 'why are there no black Legionnaires?' Would you believe the answer was because they were all on one dimension-travelling island. Shooter was so angry at not being able to make Ferro-Lad black that he rather politically made him so hideous his mask could never be removed.



The more silly characters like Bouncing Boy and Matter-Eater Lad were, in quite different ways, shuffled out of the plane of the stories.

Then big LSH fan, Paul Levitz, moved in. Paul had an innate feel for the characters, the future setting and team interaction, aided and abetted by the quite brilliant Keith Giffen. The Legion began recruiting. Personalities were more rounded, making even Wildfire more sympathetic.

And for a remarkably long time in those days, a build-up with hints, battles and, yes, losses ensued. Of course, a long time then was only 5 issues, rather than today's 5 years

but it was a wonderful run, with action in every issue. No talking head filler issues.

The LSH end up fighting beings of vast power. Clones of even Superboy and a Guardian of the

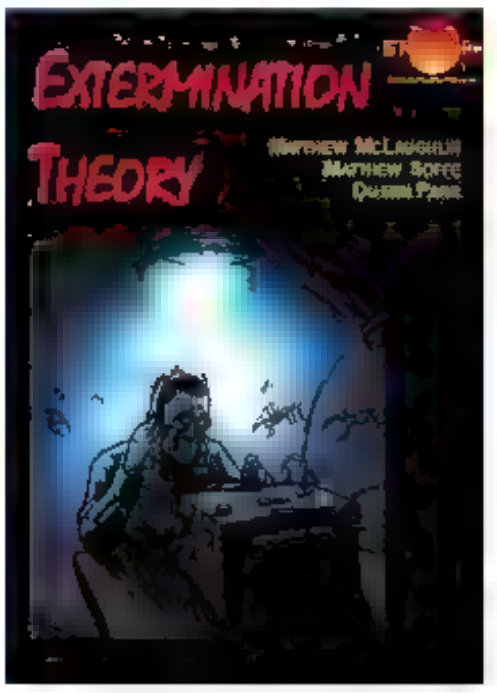
Universe (from Green Lantern) serve this terrible master. I would love to leave this round-up as a great surprise, Unfortunately, the collected edition – which is much recommended – already features the face of the villain on the front cover. Oh well!

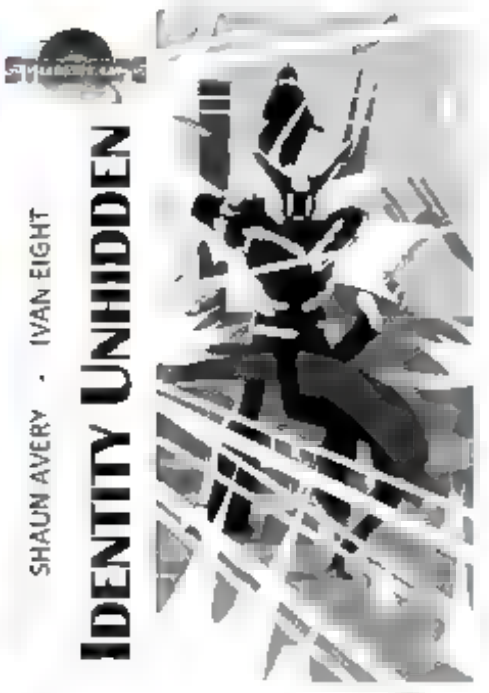
Still, hopefully Darkseid facing off against the Legion (all the Legion that is, including Superboy, Supergirl and the Legion of Substitute Heroes) will just lend itself to a further whetting of the appetite.

A deluxe edition of **the Legion of Super-Heroes: The Great Darkness Saga** can be ordered from Amazon and comes highly recommended!

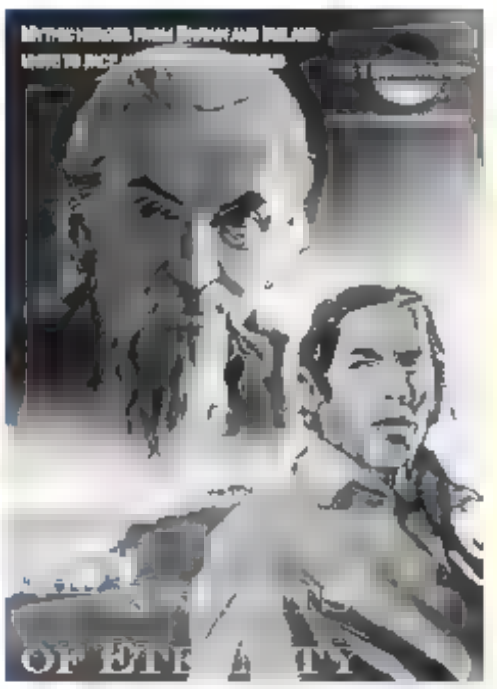
Love comics?

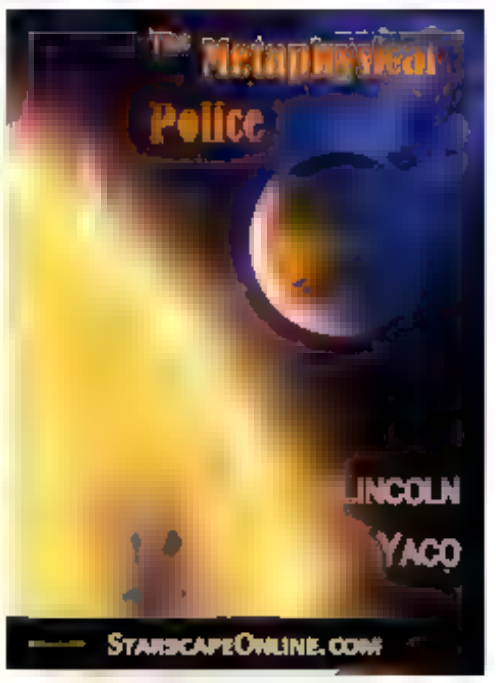
Wish they would last that little bit longer?





How about trying some prose?





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FLICKS THAT TIME FORGOT

Threads

BBC made-for-tv movie from 1984 concerning the aftermath of a nuclear war in Sheffield, Great Britain.

I first watched this as a schoolboy. My feelings were one of horror. Next day in the common room the talk was of 'I wouldn't want to survive a nuclear war'. With the phrase from the film 'you cannot win a nuclear war' going down in popular culture.

So good were my memories of the programme that I settled down to with some trepidation. Could it possibly be as good as I remembered it? I'm pleased to say the answer is yes. In fact, it's probably better as, at the time, I didn't know too much about marriage, kids and society, over and above the school playground.

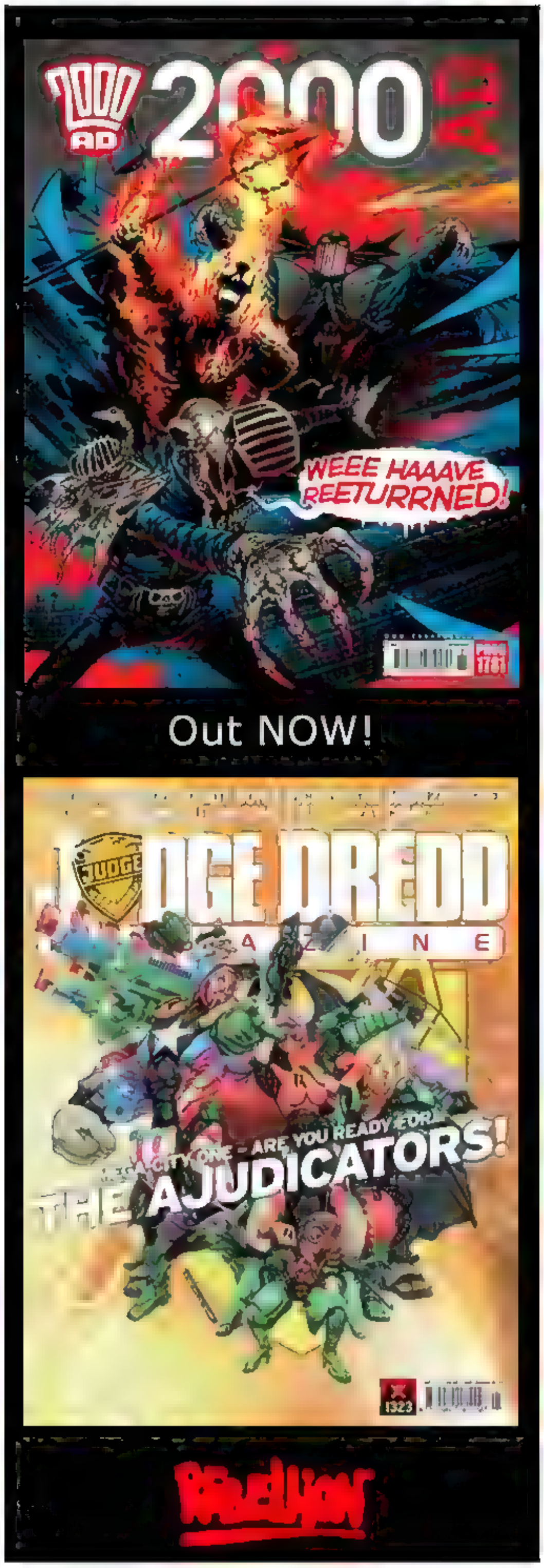
The story works so well by focussing upon a small number of people in a young family's life. The political reasons for the war are told only through infrequent news broadcasts that don't really say the full story behind the emerging conflict. In fact, we probably have as much info as most of the people in the programme. Life goes on. The end is getting closer but as one character says 'What can I do?'.

The story isn't 100 miles an hour. Instead, there's a patient build-up as we get to know the minutiae of the main characters' lives. Minutiae and lives that are destroyed in an instant. In the post-nuclear holocaust world, radiation poisoning does for most of the inhabitants. We're thrown back to the Dark Ages, where money is of no value but food and water without fertilizers or pesticides decide who is really wealthy. Life expectancy plummets as does law and order, which are now controlled by a largely unaccountable armed force. Education and travel are radically

diminished resulting in the strong regional accents of old.

It's probably pretty obvious by this time, this is no feel good movie. The devastation felt by the main characters is real and palpable. This must be one of the most important programmes ever made and should be shown regularly on tv and in schools. My feelings at the end of the show were the same as way back when, that is, 'I wouldn't want to survive a nuclear war' and 'you cannot win a nuclear war'.

Threads is available at LOVEFiLM via Amazon.co.uk and as a DVD at Play.com



WEBSCAPE

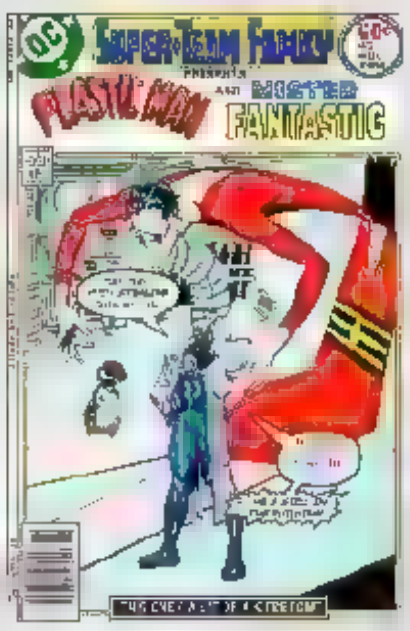
Super-Team Family

http://braveandboldlost.blogspot.co.uk/

In 2010, the owner of the site (I can only find the name 'Ross') came up with a great idea of merging characters to come up with 'lost' issues of the Brave & the Bold, DC Comics Presents, Super-Team Family, Marvel Team-Up and Marvel Two-In-One.

Some of the issues are inspired. Witness for instance, the Justice Society versus Galactus, with the tagline "*Galactus swore to never attack Earth again…but he made no such promise to Earth-Two*". Wow!

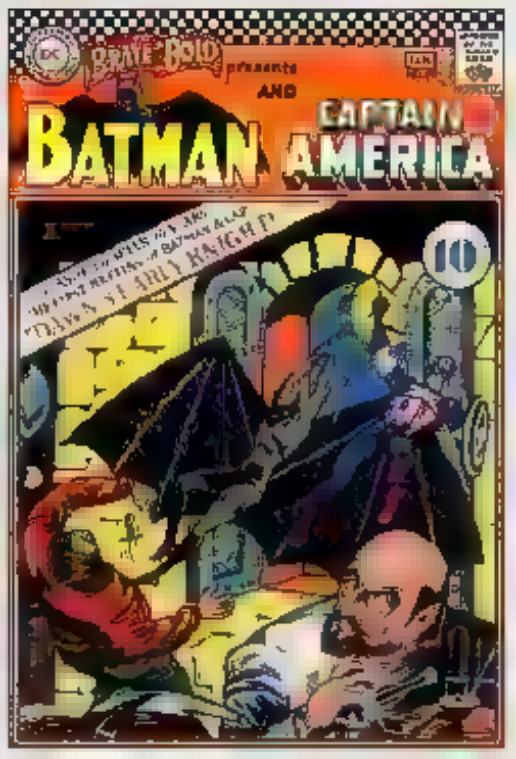
Ross also shows the counter-heroes in action, such as Plastic Man and Mr Fantastic, the Vision and Red Tornado, Tarzan and Conan etc.



All very intriguing. But it's not just comics. The site also brings together some famous faces from film and television, including the not quite forgotten Dynomutt and Blue Falcon with Spider-Man.

Personally, I'm most enamoured by the cosmic-powered covers. *What if Darth Vader Became the Herald of Galactus* is quite simply a stunning idea.

Ross has a number of 'retro' issues.



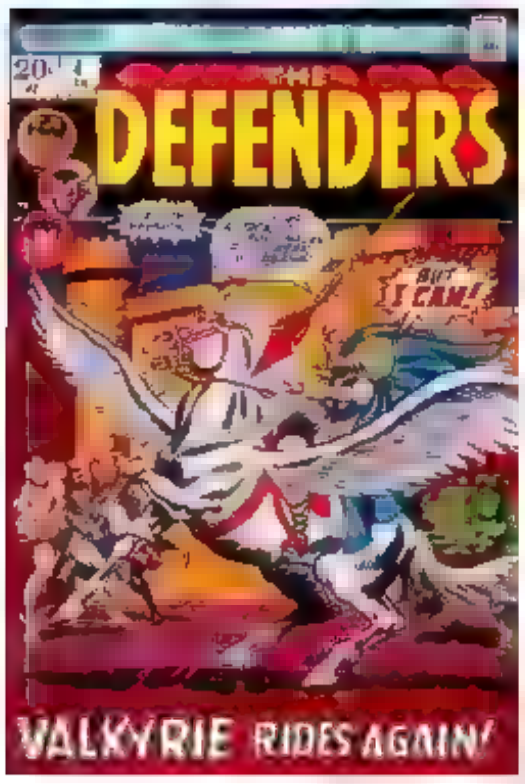
These bring to mind either the golden-age or DC's silver age. Here's a cover featuring two of the most enduring characters from that golden-age, with a Bill Finger Bats meeting a Kirby Cap, complete with DC checkerboard top.

This has to be the most fun website I've come across in a long time. Not only that, but there has to be inspiration in there for some fanfic.

THE OLD & THE NEW

Defenders #4

Defenders #4 1973



Steve Engelhart and Sal Buscema. I know what you're thinking. Famous but not renowned names in the field of comics. Yet, they produced some amazing runs. The early issues of the Defenders are testament to that.

Defenders #4 sees the first appearance of the Valkyrie. Kind of. Actually, Valkyrie was a character that first appeared in a women's lib version of the Avengers (the Liberators). However, that was really the Enchantress in disguise.

This Valkyrie was a cross between a woman trapped in madness and an Asgardian enwrapped in amnesia.

We also have the Black Knight being turned into stone. A scenario that had later repercussions as it morphed into the Avengers/ Defenders War.

So, all-in-all, we have heavyweights in The Hulk and Doctor Strange, a new Defender in Valkyrie, the 'death' of the Black Knight and powerful villains in the Enchantress and the Executioner.

Plenty of action. Plenty of intrigue.

Defenders #4 2012

I was significantly less than enamoured by the latest issue of the Defenders.

Doctor Strange is the only Defender that makes any significant input to the issue. Iron Fist appears to be an idiot, rather than the Zen master he is.

Indeed, most of the issue is made up of a teenager being embarrassed about a sexual relationship with the Doc and a less than powerful teen magician wanting one of his books.

Namor appears at the very end to warn of a threat. And that's it! A non-story to advertise that next comic / TPB.

The Upshot

The latest Defenders 4 doesn't hold a candle to the original. Not only was the 1973 book exciting and packed with characters (it is a team after all); it also had ramifications for the Marvel Universe. The latest is simply an advert for the next book. I feel cheated.

THIS DAY IN COMICS

May 1982

30 YEARS AGO TODAY!

2000 AD #262-266
Action Comics #531
The Aliens #2
All-Star Squadron #9
Alternate Existance #1
Amazing Heroes #11
The Amazing Spider-Man #228
Arak Son of Thunder #9
Archie #316
Archie... Archie Andrews, Where Are You? Comics Digest Magazine #22
Archie's Double Digest Quarterly Magazine #2
Archie's Girls Betty and Veronica #317
Archie's Jokebook Magazine #285
Archie's Pals 'n' Gals #158
Archie's TV Laugh-Out #85
The Avengers #219
Batman #347
The Best of DC #24
Betty and Me #128
Blueberry #7
The Brave and the Bold #186
Brothers of the Spear #18
Buck Rogers in the 25th Century #16
Captain America #269
Captain Carrot & His Amazing Zoo Crew! 3
Captain Victory and Galactic Rangers #4
Cerebus #38
Charlton Bullseye #7
Conan the Barbarian #134
Crazy Magazine #86
Creepy #137
Daredevil #182
Dazzler #15
DC Comics Presents #45
DC Special Blue Ribbon Digest #21
The Defenders #107
Dennis the Menace #7
Destroyer Duck #1
Detective Comics #514
Doctor Who Magazine #64
Donald Duck #240
Fantastic Four #242
Fantastic Four Roast
The Flash #309
G.I. Combat #241
Ghost Rider #68
Ghosts #112
Green Lantern #152
Grimm's Ghost Stories #59
Heavy Metal #62
House of Mystery #304
The Incredible Hulk #271
Iron Man #158
Jonah Hex #60
Jughead with Archie Digest #50
Justice League of America #202
Ka-Zar the Savage #14
King Conan #10
Legion of Super-Heroes #287
Life with Archie #230
Marvel Fanfare #2
Marvel Super-Heroes #385
Marvel Tales #139
Marvel Team-Up #117
Marvel Two-In-One #87
Master of Kung Fu #112
Mendy and the Golem #5
Micronauts #41
Moon Knight #19
The New Adventures of Superboy #29
The New Teen Titans #19
The Occult Files of Doctor Spektor #25
Pep Comics #385
Power Man and Iron Fist #81
Superman Family 218
ROM Spaceknight #30
The Saga of Swamp Thing #1
The Savage Sword Of Conan #76
Sgt. Rock #364
Space Family Robinson #59
The Spectacular Spider-Man #66
Star Wars #59
Superman #371
Thor #319
The Twilight Zone #92
Uncanny X-Men #157
The Unexpected #222
Unknown Soldier #263
Vampirella #105
Walt Disney's Comics and Stories #499
The Warlord #57
Weird War Tales #111
Wonder Woman #291
World's Finest Comics #279

May 1982 was comeback central at the House of Ideas!

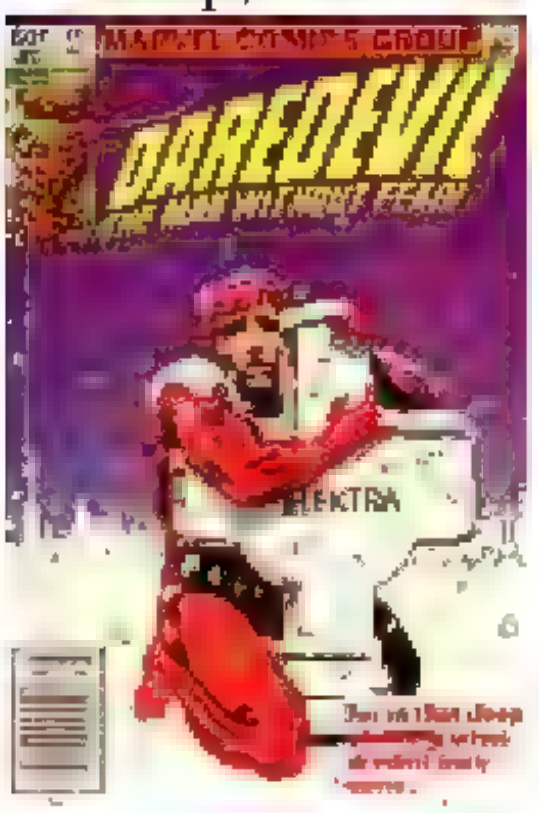
There used to be two rules of comics:

1) Nobody stays dead forever

2) Nobody stays dead forever…except Bucky!

Unfortunately, there's now only the one rule. So to prove that, Marvel brought back a couple of dames!

First up, we had a young writer/ artist, that was beginning to garner some interest around a character that had become a little tired. Yep, it was Frank Miller on Daredevil.

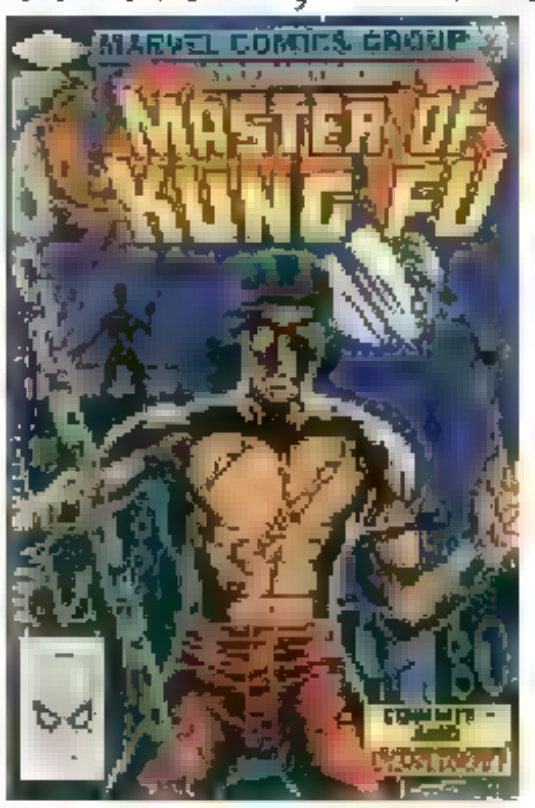


Great cover, huh? Miller was really creating, not the mythos of Daredevil, but rather the character of Matt Murdock. After all, Bruce Wayne is simply a front for Batman but Spider-Man is a disguise for Peter Parker. It's subtle but hugely important.

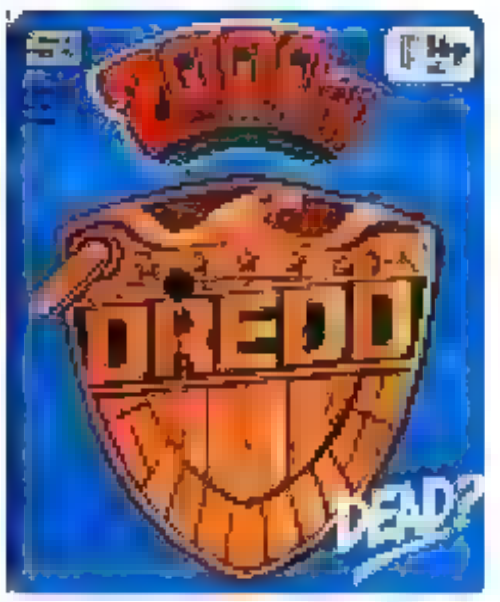
We also have Phoenix make a return to the X-Men. How can that be when we all know she died in some classic episodes? Well, relax. It's simply Kitty Pryde in a 'costume'. We'd all agree bringing her back would be a terrible move. Erm….

Over at Marvel Team-Up, we have Spidey meeting Wolverine in a bit of a yawn-fest, whilst Jim Shooter writes another great Avengers tale.

Although you might struggle to believe it, it was actually Doug Moench that was the hottest writer of the time. His Moon Knight with Bill Sienkiewicz and Master Kung-Fu with Rick Maygar were staggeringly good. It's a shame that there seems little interest in them these days, aside from Bill's nigh-on Neal Adams art.



DC Comics began the return of the muck monster in Saga of the Swamp Thing – a title that paved the way for later Alan Moore greatness. Aside from that…nothing really. I mean, the JLA and Teen Titans were decent enough. Flash, Green Lantern, All-Star Squadron and so on. All ok. Just nothing special.



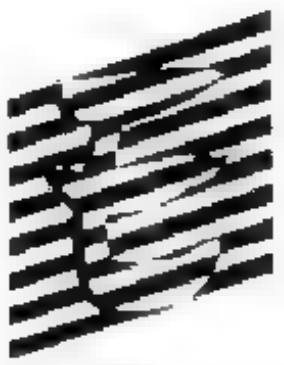
Things were a lot better over in jolly old Blighty, where Judge Dredd in 2000AD was engaged in the epic Apocalypse War.

Over all, a mixed bag of comic fun.

MORE YESTERDAYS NEXT TIME IN COMICSCAPE!

EISNER AWARDS

The nominees for the Eisner Awards were recently announced. Marvel and DC Comics dominate many of the categories but there's still room for a number of independents.



The nominees are:

Best Short Story

- "A Brief History of the Art Form Known as Hortisculpture," by Adrian Tomine, in Optic Nerve #12 (Drawn & Quarterly)
- "Harvest of Fear," by Jim Woodring, in The Simpsons' Treehouse of Horror #17 (Bongo)
- "The Phototaker," by Guy Davis, in Metal Hurlant vol. 2 (Humanoids)
- "The Seventh," by Darwyn Cooke, in Richard Stark's Parker: The Martini Edition (IDW)
- "The Speaker," by Brandon Graham, in Dark Horse Presents #7 (Dark Horse)

Best Single Issue (or One-Shot)

- Daredevil #7, by Mark Waid, Paolo Rivera, and Joe Rivera (Marvel)
- Ganges #4, by Kevin Huizenga (Fantagraphics)
- Locke & Key: Guide to the Known Keys, by Joe Hill and Gabriel Rodriguez (IDW)
- Princeless #3, by Jeremy Whitley and M. Goodwin (Action Lab)
- The Unwritten #24: "Stairway to Heaven" by Mike Carey, Peter Gross, and Al Davison (Vertigo/DC)

Best Continuing Series

- Daredevil, by Mark Waid, Marcos Martin, Paolo Rivera, and Joe Rivera (Marvel)
- Naoki Urasawa's 20th Century Boys, by Naoki Urasawa (VIZ Media)
- Rachel Rising, by Terry Moore (Abstract Studio)
- Ultimate Comics Spider-Man, by Brian Michael Bendis and Sara Pichelli (Marvel)
- Usagi Yojimbo, by Stan Sakai (Dark Horse)

Best Limited Series

- Atomic Robo and the Ghost of Station X, by Brian Clevinger and Scott Wegener (Red 5)
- Criminal: The Last of the Innocent, by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips (Marvel Icon)

- Flashpoint: Batman - Knight of Vengeance, by Brian Azzarello and Eduardo Risso (Vertigo/DC)
- The New York Five, by Brian Wood and Ryan Kelly (Vertigo/DC)
- Who Is Jake Ellis? by Nathan Edmondson & Tonci Zonjic (Image)

Best Publication for Early Readers (up to age 7)

- Beauty and the Squat Bears, by Émile Bravo (Yen Press)
- Benjamin Bear in Fuzzy Thinking, by Philippe Coudray (Candlewick/Toon Books)
- Dragon Puncher Island, by James Kochalka (Top Shelf)
- Nursery Rhyme Comics, edited by Chris Duffy (First Second)
- Patrick in a Teddy Bear's Picnic, by Geoffrey Hayes (Candlewick/Toon Books)

Best Publication for Kids (ages 8-12)

- The All-New Batman: The Brave and the Bold, by Sholly Fisch, Rick Burchett, and Dan Davis (DC)
- Amelia Rules: The Meaning of Life ... And Other Stuff, by Jimmy Gownley (Atheneum)
- The Ferret's a Foot, by Colleen AF Venable and Stephanie Yue (Graphic Universe/Lerner)
- Princeless, by Jeremy Whitley and M. Goodwin (Action Lab)
- Snarked, by Roger Langridge (kaboom!)
- Zita the Space Girl, by Ben Hatke (First Second)

Best Publication for Young Adults (Ages 12-17)

- Anya's Ghost, by Vera Brosgol (First Second)
- Around the World, by Matt Phelan (Candlewick)
- Level Up, by Gene Yang and Thien Pham (First Second)
- Life with Archie, by Paul Kupperberg, Fernando Ruiz, Pat & Tim Kennedy, Norm Breyfogle et al. (Archie)
- Mystic, by G. Willow Wilson and David Lopez (Marvel)

Best Anthology

- Dark Horse Presents, edited by Mike Richardson (Dark Horse)
- Nelson, edited by Rob Davis and Woodrow Phoenix (Blank Slate)
- Nursery Rhyme Comics, edited by Chris Duffy (First Second)
- The Someday Funnies, edited by Michel Choquette (Abrams ComicArts)
- Yiddishkeit: Jewish Vernacular and the New Land, edited by Harvey Pekar and Paul Buhle (Abrams ComicArts)

Best Humour Publication

- The Art of Doug Sneyd: A Collection of Playboy Cartoons (Dark Horse Books)
- Chimichanga, by Eric Powell (Dark Horse)
- Coffee: It's What's for Dinner, by Dave Kellett (Small Fish)
- Kinky & Cosy, by Nix (NBM)
- Milk & Cheese: Dairy Products Gone Bad, by Evan Dorkin (Dark Horse Books)

Best Digital Comic

- Bahrain, by Josh Neufeld, www.cartoonmovement.com/comic/24
- Battlepug, by Mike Norton, www.battlepug.com
- Delilah Dirk and the Turkish Lieutenant, by Tony Cliff, www.delilahdirk.com
- Outfoxed, by Dylan Meconis, www.dylanmeconis.com/outfoxed
- Sarah and the Seed, by Ryan Andrews, www.ryan-a.com/comics/sarahandtheseed01.htm

Best Reality-Based Work

- Around the World, by Matt Phelan (Candlewick)
- Green River Killer: A True Detective Story, by Jeff Jensen and Jonathan Case (Dark Horse Books)
- Marzi: A Memoir, by Marzena Sowa and Sylvain Savoia (Vertigo/DC)
- Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths, by Shigeru Mizuki (Drawn & Quarterly)
- Vietnamerica, by GB Tran (Villard)

Best Graphic Album - New

- Bubbles & Gondola, by Renaud Dillies (NBM)
- Freeway, by Mark Kalesniko (Fantagraphics)
- Habibi, by Craig Thompson (Pantheon)
- Ivy, by Sarah Olekysk (Oni)
- Jim Henson's Tale of Sand, adapted by Ramón K. Pérez (Archaia)
- One Soul, by Ray Fawkes (Oni)

Best Graphic Album - Reprint

- Big Questions, by Anders Nilsen (Drawn & Quarterly)
- The Death Ray, by Dan Clowes (Drawn & Quarterly)
- Richard Stark's Parker: The Martini Edition, by Darwyn Cooke (IDW)
- WE3: The Deluxe Edition, by Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely (Vertigo/DC)
- Zahra's Paradise, by Amir and Khalil (First Second)

Best Archival Collection/Project - Strips

- Flash Gordon and Jungle Jim, by Alex Raymond and Don

Moore, edited by Dean Mullaney (IDW/Library of American Comics)
- Forgotten Fantasy: Sunday Comics 1900-1915, edited by Peter Maresca (Sunday Press)
- Prince Valiant vols. 3-4, by Hal Foster, edited by Kim Thompson (Fantagraphics)
- Tarpé Mills's Miss Fury Sensational Sundays, 1944-1949, edited by Trina Robbins (IDW/Library of American Comics)
- Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse vols. 1-2, by Floyd Gottfredson, edited by David Gerstein and Gary Groth (Fantagraphics)

Best Archival Collection/Project - Comic Books

- Government Issue: Comics for the People: 1940s-2000s, edited by Richard L. Graham (Abrams ComicArts)
- The MAD Fold-In Collection, by Al Jaffee (Chronicle)
- PS Magazine: The Best of Preventive Maintenance Monthly, by Will Eisner (Abrams ComicArts)
- The Sugar and Spike Archives, vol. 1, by Sheldon Mayer (DC)
- Walt Simonson's The Mighty Thor Artist's Edition (IDW)

Best U.S. Edition of International Material

- Bubbles & Gondola, by Renaud Dillies (NBM)
- Isle of 100,000 Graves, by Fabien Vehlmann and Jason (Fantagraphics)
- Like a Sniper Lining Up His Shot, by Jacques Tardi and Jean-Patrick Manchette (Fantagraphics)
- The Manara Library, vol. 1: Indian Summer and Other Stories, by Milo Manara with Hugo Pratt (Dark Horse Books)
- Night Animals: A Diptych About What Rushes Through the Bushes, by Brecht Evens (Top Shelf)

Best U.S. Edition of International Material - Asia

- A Bride's Story, by Kaoru Mori (Yen Press)
- Drops of God, by Tadashi Agi and Shu Okimoto (Vertical)
- Onward Towards Our Noble Deaths, by Shigeru Mizuki (Drawn & Quarterly)
- Saturn Apartments, vols. 3-4, by Hisae Iwaoka (VIZ Media)
- Stargazing Dog, by Takashi Murakami (NBM)
- Wandering Son, vol. 1, by Shimura Takako (Fantagraphics)

Best Writer

- Cullen Bunn, The Sixth Gun (Oni)

- Mike Carey, The Unwritten (Vertigo/DC)
- Jeff Jensen, Green River Killer: A True Detective Story (Dark Horse Books)
- Jeff Lemire, Animal Man, Flashpoint: Frankenstein and the Creatures of the Unknown, Frankenstein: Agent of S.H.A.D.E. (DC); Sweet Tooth (Vertical/DC)
- Mark Waid, Irredeemable, Incorruptible (BOOM!); Daredevil (Marvel)

Best Writer/Artist

- Rick Geary, The Lives of Sacco and Vanzetti (NBM)
- Terry Moore, Rachel Rising (Abstract Studio)
- Sarah Oleksyk, Ivy (Oni)
- Craig Thompson, Habibi (Pantheon)
- Jim Woodring, Congress of the Animals (Fantagraphics), "Harvest of Fear," in The Simpsons' Treehouse of Horror #17 (Bongo)

Best Penciller/Inker or Penciller/Inker Team

- Michael Allred, iZombie (Vertigo/DC); Madman All-New Giant-Size Super-Ginchy Special (Image)
- Ramón K. Pérez, Jim Henson's Tale of Sand (Archaia)
- Chris Samnee, Captain America and Bucky, Ultimate Spider-Man #155 (Marvel)
- Marcos Martin, Daredevil (Marvel)
- Paolo Rivera/Joe Rivera, Daredevil (Marvel)

Best Cover Artist

- Michael Allred, iZombie (Vertigo/DC)
- Francesco Francavilla, Black Panther (Marvel); Lone Ranger, Lone Ranger/Zorro, Dark Shadows, Warlord of Mars (Dynamite); Archie Meets Kiss (Archie)
- Victor Kalvachev, Blue Estate (Image)
- Marcos Martin, Daredevil, Amazing Spider-Man (Marvel)
- Sean Phillips, Criminal: The Last of the Innocent (Marvel Icon)
- Yuko Shimizu, The Unwritten (Vertigo/DC)

Best Colouring

- Laura Allred, iZombie (Vertigo/DC); Madman All-New Giant-Size Super-Ginchy Special (Image)
- Bill Crabtree, The Sixth Gun (Oni)
- Ian Herring and Ramón K. Pérez, Jim Henson's Tale of Sand (Archaia)
- Victor Kalvachev, Blue Estate (Image)

- Cris Peter, Casanova: Avaritia, Casanova: Gula (Marvel Icon)

Best Lettering

- Deron Bennett, Billy Fog, Jim Henson's Dark Crystal, Jim Henson's Tale of Sand, Mr. Murder Is Dead (Archaia); Helldorado, Puss N Boots, Richie Rich (APE Entertainment)
- Jimmy Gownley, Amelia Rules! The Meaning of Life ... And Other Stuff (Atheneum)
- Laura Lee Gulledge, Page by Paige (Amulet Books/Abrams)
- Tom Orzechowski, Manara Library, with L. Lois Buholis(Dark Horse); Manga Man (Houghton Mifflin); Savage Dragon (Image)
- Stan Sakai, Usagi Yojimbo (Dark Horse)

Best Comics-Related Journalism

- The AV Club Comics Panel, by Noel Murray, Oliver Sava et al., www.avclub.com/features/comics-panel/
- The Beat, produced by Heidi MacDonald et al., www.comicsbeat.com
- The Comics Journal, edited by Gary Groth, and The Comics Journal website, www.tcj.com, edited by Timothy Hodler and Dan Nadel (Fantagraphics)
- The Comics Reporter, produced by Tom Spurgeon, www.comicsreporter.com
- TwoMorrows Publications: Alter Ego edited by Roy Thomas, Back Issue edited by Michael Eury, Draw edited by Mike Manley, and Jack Kirby Collector edited by John Morrow

Best Educational/Academic Work

- Alan Moore: Conversations, ed. by Eric Berlatsky (University Press of Mississippi)
- Cartooning: Philosophy & Practice, by Ivan Brunetti (Yale University Press)
- Critical Approaches to Comics: Theories and Methods, edited by Matthew J. Smith and Randy Duncan (Routledge)
- Hand of Fire: The Comics Art of Jack Kirby, by Charles Hatfield (University Press of Mississippi)
- Projections: Comics and the History of 21st Century Storytelling, by Jared Gardner (Stanford University Press)

Best Comics-Related Book

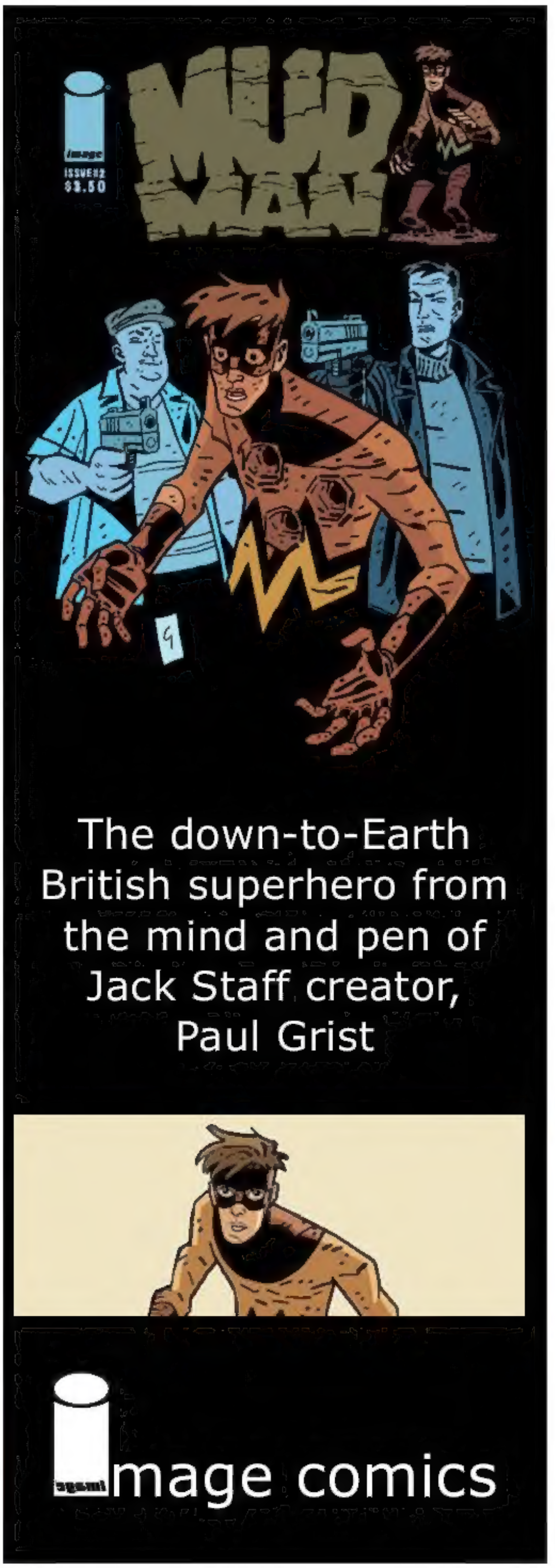
- Archie: A Celebration of America's Favorite Teenagers, edited by Craig Yoe (IDW/Yoe Books)
- Caniff: A Visual Biography, edited by Dean Mullaney (IDW/Library of American

Comics)

- Drawing Power: A Compendium of Cartoon Advertising, edited by Rick Marschall and Warren Bernard (Fantagraphics/Marschall Books)
- Genius Isolated: The Life and Art of Alex Toth, designed by Dean Mullaney (IDW/Library of American Comics)
- MetaMaus, by Art Spiegelman (Pantheon)

Best Publication Design

- Genius Isolated: The Life and Art of Alex Toth, designed by Dean Mullaney (IDW/Library of American Comics)
- Jim Henson's Tale of Sand, designed by Eric Skillman (Archaia)
- Kinky & Cosy, designed by Nix (NBM)
- The MAD Fold-In Collection, designed by Michael Morris (Chronicle)
- Richard Stark's Parker: The Martini Edition, designed by Darwyn Cooke (IDW)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